

FAQ

Applicant Eligibility Questions

Can an applicant submit a proposal as lead agency and be a partner on another proposal?

Yes. We encourage organizations to partner together when possible and appropriate.

Is an environmental commission considered a “local government unit”?

A municipal government needs to be the applicant, with an environmental commission as a project partner.

Will independent regenerative land management consultants be eligible only if they are incorporated as a 501c3?

Private companies and landowners are eligible applicants; however, a 25% match is required. Private applicants should note that grant funding is taxable.

Can an applicant submit 2 proposals within the Green Carbon program (one Forest and one Urban)?

Yes. Applicants can submit multiple proposals. If the proposals involve distinctly different projects at separate project locations, then the proposals will need to be submitted as separate applications in DEP SAGE. When possible, we encourage applicants to submit a single proposal with both Forest and Urban Forest project elements if appropriate and the projects are occurring in the same site.

Can an applicant submit 2 proposals (one Green Carbon and one Blue Carbon project)?

Yes. Applicants can submit multiple proposals. If the proposals involve distinctly different projects (Blue Carbon and Green Carbon) at separate project locations, then the proposals will need to be submitted as separate applications in DEP SAGE. When possible and appropriate, we encourage applicants to submit a single proposal with Green Carbon and Blue Carbon project elements if the projects are occurring in the same site.

Funding and Eligible Costs Questions

Is the grant award provided at the start of the project (rather than reimbursements)?

Grant funds will be awarded on a reimbursement basis upon submission of a completed expenditure report with supporting documentation. If an applicant has concerns about funding to start the project, advance funding may be allowable. Please discuss this with NCS grant staff during the preparation of your grant agreement.

For private landowners, can 25% matching funds come from hours worked or is it purely monetary?

Yes, hours work can count as part of the match for private landowners, however this will need to be documented. See [this resource](#) for how to measure the monetary value of volunteer time in New Jersey. The current rate is \$32.39 per volunteer hour.



Is there a match required for non-profit applications?

No, the match is only required for private, for-profit entities or individuals. However, your ability to leverage other funding would be viewed more favorably when NJDEP ranks applications.

Would a reforestation project allow including the cost of deer fencing/tree shelters?

Yes.

Can funding through this grant focus on increasing hunting in areas impacted by high deer densities to reduce deer populations to more sustainable levels?

No.

Would an urban forestry plan be eligible for funding?

No, but see other resources [here](#).

Can the NCS grant money only be used for implementation, or can grant funds be used for planning and/or design work?

We will consider proposals that include planning and/or design work, but proposals that are 'shovel-ready' will be scored higher in the application evaluation process. All projects must be able to move forward to construction to receive funding.

Can projects leverage NCS grant funds to carry out inventories?

No, an inventory is necessary to evaluate carbon sequestration potential. For carrying out inventories we suggest referring to the [New Jersey Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program](#).

Can NCS grant funds be used to pay for permits?

Yes, permits are a cost that are eligible for reimbursement with grant funds.

For individual property owners that might be new to this grant process - can time and/or resources to conduct surveys be counted as in-kind match?

Yes.

Can funding be used to purchase development rights (deed restrictions that would be in place)?

No.

Project Applicability Questions

Would a landfill closure plan that incorporates living shorelines and forest restoration be eligible for the NCS Grant Program?

Landfills are eligible for funding for living shorelines so long as they are protecting brackish or salt water marshes from erosion, provided these activities are incorporated and/or are consistent with an approved closure plan. For forest restoration funding, the applicant must demonstrate that the planting will not interfere with the landfill cap and associated appurtenances and support long term forest health. Note that NCS funding cannot go towards site remediation work.

Is there a project minimum size in terms of acreage?

No, there is no minimum acreage for green or blue carbon projects. However, overall project size could impact a proposal's carbon sequestering potential and/or the amount of associated co-benefits which will affect how the proposal is evaluated.

Is dredging an eligible project? Would a dredging project that potentially increases tidal flow and increased salinity score points?

If the project increases salinity and/or vegetative cover in salt marshes, then it could be considered a project that restores tidal flows or a salt marsh vegetation restoration project which are eligible projects. In the DEP SAGE application, the applicant would then submit all the baseline data requested under each blue carbon project type it could be classified as.

Are projects that mitigate storm water damage and increase ground water absorption considered eligible?

Urban Forestry proposals that reduce paved and/or impervious surfaces while expanding or enhancing the urban tree canopy are eligible green carbon projects.

Can the grant funds be used for non-tree natural stormwater mitigation landscaping techniques and features?

No.

Is native vegetation restoration only envisaged, or will suitability under future climate scenarios be taken into account?

For Blue Carbon Projects and non-urban forest projects, native species must be utilized. For urban forest projects non-native and native can be used and the consideration of climate change should be considered. So long as the planting is not an invasive, applicants should consider the shifting climate in their planting for urban forest projects.

Can this be matched with a dam removal project or restoration of riparian areas?

Yes, we encourage leveraging and combining with other projects and funding sources.

Is maritime forest included in this, and if not, would it get considered if combined with a blue carbon project on same site?

Yes, but it must be a native forest that can persist in the landscape for extended period of time.

Are projects that are revegetating the seaward side of the beaches and dunes eligible for funding?

No, funding is restricted to tidal marshes.

Could the living shoreline include removal of a deteriorating bulkhead that needs restoration?

Yes, this would be eligible for funding.

Do natural/living shorelines also include hybrid shorelines?

Yes, so long as they are protecting brackish or salt water marshes from erosion and/or increasing salinity.

Are native trees and cultivars required for urban tree plantings?

No, for urban forestry projects both native and non-native trees can be used. However, the planting of [invasive species](#) is not permitted. In Urban forestry we practice 'right tree right place'. If a non-native tree is more suited to the site or a cultivar of a tree it is recommended to plant that to maximize the life span of that tree and carbon storage/sequestration. In cases where native trees can be used, we strongly recommend using them.

Data Questions

Does the RFP include resources for calculating carbon sequestration of a given project?

Yes, please review [Appendix A, Application Guidance for Project Proposals](#) in the [Natural Climate Solutions Request for Proposal](#), where detailed guidance is provided about the data submittal requirements. Please note, all projects will be evaluated using standard carbon sequestration rates based on the project data you provide in your application. Alternatively, if available, you can also provide more refined sequestration rates for your project via DEP SAGE.

Can one transfer data from iTree Streets to iTree Eco?

Yes, this can be done by downloading the i-Tree Street data in Excel format and uploading to i-Tree Eco. i-Tree support can help walk you through the process if you have any issues: i-Tree Support [<info@itreetools.org>](mailto:info@itreetools.org). You can also use the [i-Tree Eco Manual](#) to see how to upload your old data set into Eco.

Would a meadow reforestation require iTree Eco data?

No, a meadow reforestation project would require using the [Forest Vegetation Simulator \(FVS\)](#).

What data calculations are required if replanting an open field?

Planting an open field does not require a starting inventory but does require management/planting projections through the [Forest Vegetation Simulator](#) (FVS). In FVS you can start with bare ground and implement a planting activity that should be projected out to the year 2050. In this scenario, the "no management" run would be a qualitative description of the open field.

Is a full forest stand inventory is needed prior to submission?

Yes, unless you are planting on bare ground.

Permitting & Conservation Easements Questions

Will it be possible to request funding for permitting?

Yes, permit costs are eligible for reimbursement with grant funds.

Does the conservation easement need to be in place at the time the application is submitted?

No, just by the time of grant agreement.

How long does the conservation easement need to be?

Conservation easements typically last in perpetuity. Projects should include deed restrictions that conserve the project with conservation restrictions like those used for land resource plans and land preservation.

Project Evaluation and General Application Questions

Would an application that takes a regional approach grade better for a grant award?

Yes, having more partners scores higher. Projects with greater carbon sequestration potential also score higher. Project scoring is based on the scoring criteria outlined in Appendix A of the RFP.

If I registered in DEP SAGE several years ago, is my registration still valid?

Yes, DEP SAGE accounts do not expire. Make sure you registered previously with **NJDEP** SAGE and not with another New Jersey Department that also uses a SAGE system (such as DCA, DOT). Those accounts will not work for NJDEP SAGE, and you will have to create a new account in that case.

Is there a specific percentage allocated to Blue Carbon versus Green Carbon? Will these be evaluated separately?

Funding is not allocated by percentage to Blue Carbon versus Green Carbon Projects. These projects will be evaluated collectively.

Will a proposal be denied as a whole if it contains project elements or activities outside the scope of the eligible project types?

A proposal that contains project elements outside the scope of eligible project types will not be denied outright, but this NCS grant will not fund the portions of a proposal outside of the scope of project types listed in the RFP.